

Review Article

Frederick Ashton- a 20th century poet of dance

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Abstract

Frederick Ashton (1904-1988) can be considered as a poet of dance, comparable to Shakespeare in his field for his extraordinary understanding of the human heart. The infinite spectrum of his ballets, with their moods, nuances and musicality reflect his choreographic genius. As Founding Choreographer of the Royal Ballet, Ashton has choreographed over a hundred ballets and produced many masterpieces noted for their elegance, quick footwork, purity in technique, creativity, unique vocabulary, musicality and lyric quality, defining the “English style of ballet”. Inspired by the famous ballerina Anna Pavlova, his first muse, Ashton decided that he must dance, and during his long career, created the “Ashton style” in ballet, with love as the most important theme in his work. The yearning and suffering he experienced, the love he wanted so much to give and to receive was all present in his ballets. He believed that ballet must be a complete work of art and had the ability move within a single work from lyricism to comedy or wit. The diversity of Ashton’s ballets prove a challenge for all dancers and many of his works contribute to the repertoire of the Royal Ballet and companies all over the world. Ashton’s genius is surpassed by none and rivalled by few in the whole of the history of ballet and his heritage should be preserved for future generations as the Mariinsky Ballet preserves Petipa’s, New York City Ballet preserves Balanchine’s and the Royal Danish Ballet preserves Bournonville’s legacy. The aim of this article is to scrutinise his major choreographic accomplishments, as much as is to be gained from further exploration of his works which will continue to be a rich source of inspiration for the world of dance.

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Introduction

Frederick Ashton (1904-1988) has been considered as a genius, a poet of dance and has been compared to Shakespeare in his field for “his extraordinary understanding of the human heart and mind, and for his ability to illuminate them through his own art form” (Rigby, 1994, p.53). During his career, as Founding Choreographer of the Royal Ballet, Ashton choreographed over a hundred ballets, producing many masterpieces noted for their elegance, technique, creativity, unique vocabulary, musicality and lyric quality defining the English style of ballet (Photo 1).

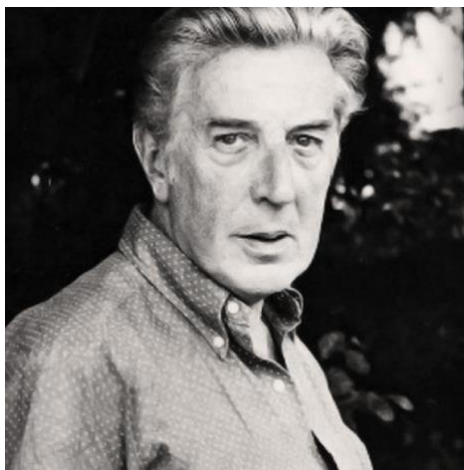


Photo 1.

Portrait of Sir Frederick Ashton (<https://www.operaballet.nl/en/sir-frederick-ashton>)

Source of Inspiration

It is an interesting fact that as the most “English” of British choreographers, he was in fact born in Ecuador, and spent his childhood in Lima, Peru. At the age of thirteen, Ashton saw Anna Pavlova dance during one of her tours in Lima and immediately decided that he must dance, despite the opposition of his family. As his first muse, Pavlova inspired him throughout his life. Influences of his childhood can be traced in his early ballets, such as his mother’s tea-parties in *A Wedding Boquet* and his background as an altar boy in *The Wise Virgins*. He started studying ballet at the late age of 20 under Leonid Massine, a famous choreographer with Diaghilev’s *Ballets Russes*. Massine had studied with Cecchetti and taught Ashton the principals of Cecchetti’s ballet technique. Ashton was influenced by the use of the upper body, port de bras and épaulement and considered it to have invaluable use throughout a dancer’s career (Glasstone, 1994). Bronislava Nijinska, who was also a great admirer of the Cecchetti method, made a powerful influence on his career as choreographer. With the realisation and acceptance of the fact that he could never be a great performer, Marie Rambert encouraged him as a choreographer, and he proved to be a genius. Many of his ballets contribute to the repertoire of the Royal Ballet and companies all over the world. The influence of Cecchetti’s ballet technique can clearly be seen in his work; extraordinary strength and control in the back and legs, beautiful port de bras, speed and accuracy in footwork and batterie, correct co-ordination, purity in line and flow of movement are all apparent in his choreographies.

Many books and articles have been written about his ballets and more recently, private life. However, there is yet much to be gained from further exploration, as his works will continue to be an ever fecund source of inspiration for the world of dance.

Spectrum of Ballets

One of the outstanding features of Ashton is the infinite spectrum of ballets, with their moods, nuances and musical possibilities stretching indefinitely. Love is the most important theme in his work. More than anything he wanted to be loved -as he is said to have once told an applicant for the job of housekeeper (Vaughan, 1988). His ballets were closely founded on his private life which enabled him to see both the woman's and the man's point of view of love and sexuality, thus being able to create such real characters as Lise, Natalia Petrovna, Marguerite, the girl in *Two Pigeons* and many more. He told Walter Terry in a private interview in 1953 that he “poured” into his choreography all his “love, frustrations and sometimes autobiographical details” (Rigby, 1994, p.61). His complicated emotional life ate him up, but it all went into his work (Kavanagh, 1996, p.317). The yearning and suffering he experienced, the love he wanted so much to give and to receive was all present in his ballets.

Ashton always said that even his “plotless” ballets had subject matter behind them (Nugent, 1994 p.27). Although not a bright student at school, Alf Dixon, a schoolmaster awakened his interest in literature and poetry (Kavanagh, 1996, p.36). He later self-educated himself through the wide reading he did in preparation for his ballets as well as inspiration from his collaborators who included poets, musicians and artists of all categories. He prepared himself thoroughly for the act of creation. He did not go into rehearsal with steps figured out like many other choreographers, but he soaked himself in the music and eagerly read whatever background literature was available in advance: literature subconsciously nourished and enriched his art (Kavanagh, 1996, p.299).

“Abstract” Ballets

As an example of his plotless ballets, *Symphonic Variations*, one of his masterpieces, is an one-act ballet choreographed to music by César Franck. The premiere took place at the Covent Garden Royal Opera House in 1946 immediately after World War II and is still performed as a perfect example of purity, integrity and simplicity (Photo 2).

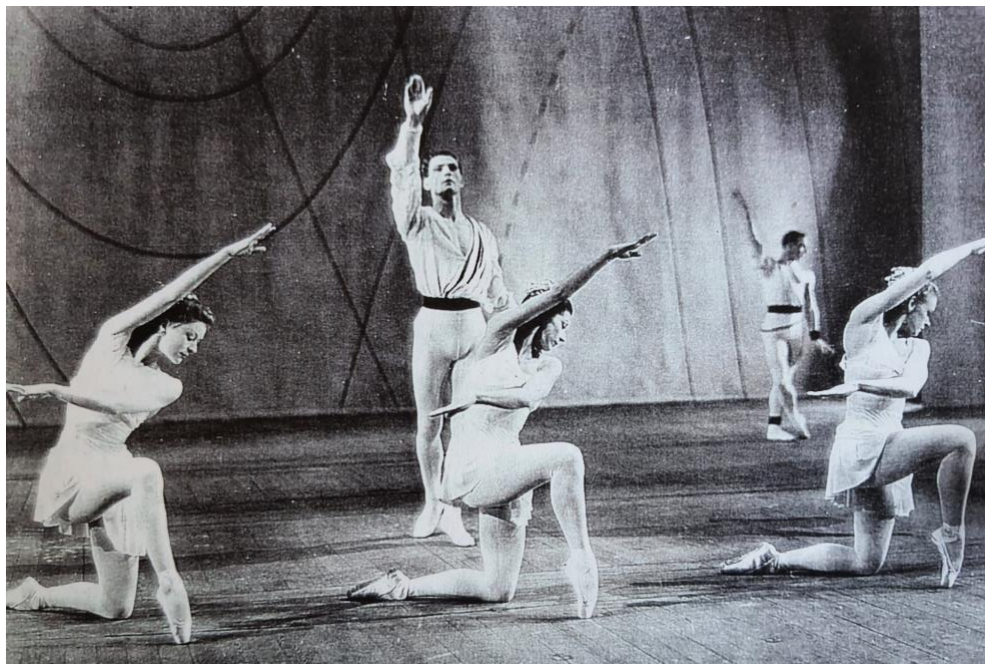


Photo 2.

Symphonic Variations, the Original Cast (Photograph by Baron) (Clarke & Crisp, 1981, p.274)

Ashton thought that ballets without a storyline, popularly known as abstract ballets, should have a theme, a leading emotion or a basic idea from which the choreography springs (Ashton, 1980, p.21). These ballets, appearing to convey nothing but pure dancing, can be suggestive of a mood or concept as opposed to an actual plot. In the initial form of *Symphonic Variations*, he was inspired by the English countryside, with the dominant theme of seasons (Vaughan, 1977, p.209). Starting with the winter, “three women move alone, unfertilized”, the male dancing “introduces the spring”: and the last part of the ballet represents to a certain extent the fullness of summer and abundant harvest (Genné, 1996, p.61). *Symphonic Variations* was his first creation for the vast Covent Garden stage. Ashton was liberated by the challenge of filling what seemed an infinity in space, even eliminating the corps de ballet he originally planned to use in favour of six soloists on an empty stage. He used the talent of his loved dancers, designs by his mentor Sophie Fedorovitch and a personal vision of mystical freshness arousing after the corrosive effects of his wartime experience filled with five years of bitterness and despair, to achieve one of the most perfect expressions of classical ballet. It was a like a marathon for the dancers who were undernourished after the war which had recently ended, a test of sheer stamina that very few dancers could endure at that time, so they took no part in any other ballet on the same evening's programme. The iconic green yellow backdrop was created by Sophie Fedorovitch who had a country cottage in Norfolk and when she and Ashton were cycling in the spring, one day they came up the hill and were inspired by the marvellous glade filled with sunshine (Vaughan, 1977, p.209). When the curtain rises, the dancers stand like Greek classical statues (emphasised by the women's white tunics) in elegant repose, arms relaxed, one foot crossed over and resting on its point. (Photo 3 and 4). This is regarded as a continuing motif and is the position, after dazzling series of choreographic variations on turning and circling matching the orchestral cascades in mounting exciting combinations in the finale, to which the dancers return as the curtain falls (Jordan, 1996 p.162). In the highest point of the pas de deux, the ballerina is seen literally floating with the support of her partner in fluttering bourrées, punctuated by flowing jetés, creating an aura of ecstasy and peace.



Photo 3.

Section of the Eastern Frieze of the Parthenon: Note Third Figure From the Right
 (<https://www.flickr.com/photos/amthomson/4834908777/>)



Photo 4.

Note Similarity in the Pose (photograph by Baron) (<https://photos.com/featured/symphonic-variations-baron.html>)

His muse was Margot Fonteyn whom he said “gave the clue to it” (Kavanagh, 1996, p.313). When the premiere of the ballet was postponed for the 2 months because of injury to Michael Some, Ashton used this chance to make revisions before the opening night. The choreography was simplified and purified; superfluous movement was removed, one of the reasons why it turned out to be one of his masterpieces (Dominic & Gilbert, 1971, p.83). Fedorovitch also refined and abstracted the sunfilled country glade in her preliminary sketches so that only a suggestion of it remained (Genné, 1996, p.63)(Photo 5-7). Ashton used César Frank’s music, disregarding Constant Lambert’s advice against the score. Ashton echoed the mystical flow of the music through simple lines and phrases with a breath-taking quality of serenity. Lambert warned that the score was “complete in itself”, but in the end admitted Ashton was right in using the score (Kavanagh, 1996, p.310).



Photo 5.

Preliminary Sketch for Symphonic Variations by Sophie Fedorovitch. Collection of James L. Gordon (Genné, 1996)



Photo 6.

Set Design of Symphonic Variations by Sophie Fedorovitch, 1946 on Display at Victoria and Albert Museum (<https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O1294941/symphonic-variations-set-design-fedorovitch-sophie/>)



Photo 7.

Final Set for Symphonic Variations (Genné, 1996)

Full-Length Ballets

As a perfect example of his full-length ballets, *La Fille mal Gardée* is a demi- caractère ballet about love. *Fille* is the simple story of a widow's daughter, Lise in love with Colas, who spoils her mother's plans to marry her off to the simpleton Alain, son of a wealthy land owner. It is the simple humanity of Ashton which gives the ballet its unique value.

Initially staged in Bordeaux in 1789, the original ballet was composed by an unknown composer. The long lost 1828 version by Hérold was discovered by Igor Guest in the Paris Opéra archives. The score for the Petipa- Ivanov production was by Hertel, but Ashton didn't like it, so he commissioned John Lanchbery to “mount an old house with new bricks” (Kavanagh, 1996, p.442). Hérold's score with contributions from Donizetti (Fanny Elssler pas de deux), Rossini (storm scene), and Hertel (theme of the clog dance), was “freely arranged and adapted” brilliantly by Lanchbery (Lanchbery, 1985), adding humour to Ashton's “poor man's Pastoral Symphony” (Kavanagh, 1996, p.441).

Tamara Karsavina's “enchanting and marvellous” demonstrations and directions of mime scenes served virtually as a libretto (Kavanagh, 1996, p.443). By choosing Nadia Nerina as Lise and David Blair as Colas, for the first time Ashton was able to choreograph without giving thought to technical limitations, cumulating to a bravura quality he had never used before. (Figure 8). The ballet was first performed in 1960. Ashton was stimulated by his two new stars and the ballet was a huge success. The mime scene in the second act as taught by Karsavina showed Nadia Nerina as Lise miming the delights of looking after and scolding her imaginary three children and Colas hiding in the “Trojan horse” behind, watching her dreaming of being married to him (Photo 9).



Photo 8.

A Radiant Picture of Nadia Nerina Showing the Quality of Her Dancing (photograph by Houston Rogers)
(<https://alchetron.com/Nadia-Nerina>)



Photo 9.

Nadia Nerina in the Famous Mime Scene (photograph by Houston Rogers) (Clarke & Crisp, 1981, p.274)

In his choreographies, Ashton uses many different forms of bourrées as a means to define characters or convey feelings to the audience. In *Fille*, pas de bourrée courus were used with dazzling effect when Nerina ran on her toes with “flying feet”. In the pas de deux, the couple used spectacular lifts like the “popo (bum) lift”, a tour de force Nerina had learnt in Russia (Photo 10).



Photo 10.

The “popo (bum) lift” (photograph by Houston Rogers) Victoria and Albert Museum Images (<https://www.vandaimages.com/preview.asp?image=1000RH0008-01&itemw=4&itemf=0006&itemstep=1&itemx=2>)

Ashton loved speed and thought speed and movement were vital, whereas turn-out was less important (Sibley & Dowell, 1996, p.156). Speed, precision and the ability to change direction without preparation are all characteristics of his choreography, shown to best in *Fille*. An enchanting leitmotif of pink ribbons are used continually in the ballet. We see the ribbons being tied and untied until Lise and Colas are finally wed and disappear in a flutter of rose petals (Photo 11). Ashton had watched Isadora Duncan in 1921 as a seventeen-year-old young man in her series of Brahms Waltzes in which she walked forward scattering rose petals. He was struck by her expressiveness and

watched her dance many times. The memory remained so vivid that almost 40 years later he adopted the idea of scattering petals, and repeated it in the *Voices of Spring Pas De Deux* (Pritchard, 1996, p.102).



Photo 11.

The Leitmotif of Pink Ribbons (Photograph by Bill Cooper) (<http://www.theballetbag.com/wp-content/uploads/2010/03/Rick-Roberta.jpg>)

Ashton also borrowed from the English pantomime tradition the idea of Widow Simone being played “en travesti” by a male dancer. He had already used this idea in *Cinderella* (1948), with himself playing the shy, fussy ugly sister and Robert Helpmann as the calculative and forceful step sister. Balancing artistry and bold comedy, Ashton and Helpmann stole the show with wonderful characterisation (Kavanagh, 1996, p.365). In *Fille*, the famous “Clog Dance” features the dancers and Widow Simone sur la pointe (on pointe) using clogs (Photo 12). Use of the traditional maypole, Lancastrian clog dancing and the stick dance make *Fille* a very English ballet (Photo 13). The rejected simpleton Alain (created by Alexander Grant) is a character which touches the heart creating a feeling of patos alongside comedy (Photo 14). Every single character is real and important in the ballet.



Photo 12.

The Famous “Clog Dance”. (Photograph by Alastair Muir)

(<https://photos.alastairmuir.com/Ballet/Royal-Ballet/La-Fille-Mal-Gardee/i-XpSKmXB/>)



Photo 13.

The “Maypole Dance” (Image: Birmingham Royal Ballet) (<https://www.manchestereveningnews.co.uk/whats-on/theatre-news/review-la-fille-mal-garde-15326943>)



Photo 14.

The Rejected Simpleton Alain (Photograph by Alice Pennefather) (<https://alicepennefatherdancephotography.wordpress.com/the-royal-ballet/la-fille-mal-garde/>)

Dramatic Ballets

A Month in the Country is an example of Ashton’s dramatic masterpieces. Based on Ivan Turgenev’s play, Ashton’s supreme drama is set in the 1850’s on the summer estate of Yslaev and his wife Natalia. Introduced into the family circle is Beliaev, the attractive tutor hired for the summer for Kolya, the young son of the family. Natalia’s bored, capricious nature is brought about with quick changeable foot-work and convoluted floor patterns in her opening solo (Photo 15).



Photo 15.

Lynn Seymour as Natalia Petrovna in A Month in the Country (photograph by Anthony Crickmay) (<https://ro.pinterest.com/pin/400609329324864723/>)

First performed in 1976, *A Month in the Country* is not a simple transfer of verbal language into body language. Ashton is able to create the outward signs by which we understand the impelling strengths and weaknesses of human personality. The depth of his characters make his works masterpieces. His muse in creating this ballet of dramatic intensity was Lynn Seymour, an accomplished dance actress by then. The success of Seymour in a solo Ashton created (*Five Brahms Waltzes in the manner of Isadora Duncan*) to recapture his image of Isadora Duncan and as a homage to her genius (Photo 16 and 17) gave him confidence to tackle *A Month in the Country*, his first important work in 8 years (Kavanagh, 1996, p.544).



Photo 16.

A study of Lynn Seymour dancing "In the manner of Isadora Duncan" (photograph by Anthony Crickmay) (https://www.dancemagazine.com/tbt-lynn-seymour-2574341086.html?share_id=3626859)



Photo 17.

Isadora Duncan, the Pioneer of Modern Dance (<https://kids.britannica.com/kids/article/Isadora-Duncan/390019>)

Movements of great dramatic intensity, even through characters do not relate face-to-face, such as when Rakitin, "the admirer" enters and puts his arms around Natalia and she thinks it's Beliaev (and her disappointment when she discovers it isn't him), and when Natalia is unaware of the momentary return of Beliaev when he kisses the ribbons of her shawl are details which make this work into a masterpiece (Photo 18).



Photo 18.

Lynn Seymour and Antony Dowell in the Dramatic Finale of A Month in the Country (photograph by Anthony Crickmay) Victoria and Albert Museum Images. (<https://www.vandaimages.com/1000RH0001-Lynn-Seymour-and-Antony-Dowell-in-Ivan-Turgenev%27s.html>)

Again, the beautifully use of the pas de bourrée courus in Natalia's love duet with Beliaev as she drifts in his arms as if in dreamlike ecstasy, express her vulnerability. Her bourrées travelling backwards before sinking into a splits like position convey sensuality and passion. The use of the bourrées by Vera in her duet with Beliaev show the use of the same step with childish quality, and is an example of how Ashton uses a simple step so differently to portray characters.

During the love duet, the quiver of the raised leg symbolizes growing emotional involvement and sensuality between Beliaev and Natalia. This develops into a passionate rond de jambe en l'air when Beliaev swings Natalia round and rests her on his knee. In the climax of the pas de deux, they turn to face each other and embrace (Photo 19). The quiver of the raised leg is echoed when Vera dances with Beliaev, but with less intensity.



Photo 19.

Love Duet between Natalia and Beliaev (the original cast: Anthony Dowell and Lynn Seymour)(photograph by Anthony Crickmay) (<https://tr.pinterest.com/pin/451345193881421506/>)

The quivering of the leg is also seen in Two Pigeons, indicating newly aroused emotion (Photo 20). Their arms entwining and framing each other's faces and with sensual upper-body expressiveness, we see the human tenderness characteristic of Ashton's love duets (Photo 21). The fluttering arms and melting backbends are reminiscent of his first muse, Anna Pavlova (Photo 22).



Photo 20.

The “Quivering Leg” in Two Pigeons. Lauren Cutbertson and Vadim Muntagirov (<https://grambo.com/explore-hashtag/thetwopigeons>)



Photo 21.

Arms Entwining and Framing Each Other's Faces in the Love Duet. Alina Cojocaru with Federico Bonelli in A Month in the Country (photograph by Tristram Kenton). (<https://www.theguardian.com/stage/2012/jul/08/royal-ballet-triple-bill-review>)



Photo 22.

Anna Pavlova in her Swan Costume (photograph City of London Museum) (Clark & Crisp, 1981, p.159)

The “Fred step” is used elegantly by Natalia and Rakitin in their exit through the garden door (Grater, 1996, p.92). This sequence of steps consisting of a combination of a *posé arabesque*, *coupé dessous*, *low développé à la seconde*, *pas de bourrée dessous* and *pas de chat* is affectionately known as “The Fred Step”, and considered to be Ashton’s choreographic signature. Based on a step used by Anna Pavlova in a *gavotte* that she performed when he saw her as a young boy, the step sometimes has slight variations and is discreetly used in many of his ballets. Ashton also uses the British music-hall tradition of eccentric dancing (especially for the men’s movement) as comic passages like the search for the lost keys in *A Month in the Country*.

Originally, Ashton wanted to use Tchaikovsky’s music, but was persuaded by Isaiah Berlin to use Frédéric Chopin’s music instead (Jordan & Grau, 1996). Again together with John Lanchbery, Ashton arranged, edited and orchestrated the existing Chopin scores to narrate and express the ballet’s libretto (Vaughan, 1977, p.394). The musical selection included: *Variations in B-flat major on a theme from Mozart’s Don Giovanni* (La ci darem la mano) for piano and orchestra (op.2), *Fantaisie brillante in A major on Polish Airs* for piano and orchestra (op.13) and *grande polonaise brillante in E-flat major*, preceded by *andante spianato in G major* for piano solo (op. 22). Ashton used the independence of dynamics and rhythm between the music and the choreography, with sometimes the musical pattern having an equivalent in the dance and sometimes the dance using the musical idea. This collaboration between Ashton and Lanchbery has produced in both form and meaning, one of the richest creative adaptations of tailoring existing music to complement narrative choreography.

Another example of his highly sensuous choreographies is *Marguerite and Armand*, based on Alexandre Dumas's (fils) play *La Dame aux Camélias*. It is danced to an orchestral arrangement of Franz Liszt's B minor piano sonata and *La lugubre gondola* (<https://www.roh.org.uk>) and was created for Margot Fonteyn and Rudolph Nureyev. Nureyev had defected to the west from the the Kirov Ballet in 1961 and Fonteyn invited him to dance in an annual charity gala. He accepted the invitation thinking he would dance *Spectre de la Rose* with her, but it was impossible because of her commitment to another dancer. Therefore, reluctantly, Frederick Ashton choreographed a “piece d'occasion”, a solo to Scriabin’s *Poeme tragique* for him. The gala was a big success, so it was planned that they danced in *Giselle* the following year. Despite their 19-year age difference, their chemistry helped create one of the greatest ballet partnerships of all times.

Ashton choreographed *Marguerite and Armand* for them in 1963 in just a fortnight. The story is told in flashbacks with the scenes depicting the passionate love between Marguerite and Armand and at the end, her death (Figures 23-26). The moving, intricate choreography of the series of *pas de deux* show his mastery of dramatic intensity. This ballet serves as a bridge between his full-length ballets and his later compact masterpieces like *A Month in the Country*, *The Dream* and *Enigma Variations* (Robertson & Hutera, 1988).



Photo 23.

Rudolf Nureyev and Margot Fonteyn in *Marguerite and Armand* (photograph by Anthony Crickmay) (<http://ticket.heraldtribune.com/2015/11/15/the-ballet-that-gave-birth-to-an-historic-partnership/>)

**Photo 24.**

A “Coup de Foudre” (photograph by Frederika Davis). (<https://nureyev.org/rudolf-nureyev-famous-roles-ballets-index/marguerite-and-armand-liszt-ashton-rudolf-nureyev/>)

**Photo 25.**

The Series of Pas de Deux Show Ashton’s Mastery of Dramatic Intensity (photograph by Anthony Crickmay). (<https://www.pressreader.com/uk/the-daily-telegraph/20200130/282406991328929>)

**Photo 26.**

Alessandra Ferri and Federico Bonelli in Marguerite and Armand (photograph by Tristram Kenton) (ROH Archives)

Conclusion

All of these and many more, show Ashton's choreographic genius, surpassed by none and rivalled by few in the whole of the history of ballet (Photo 27). The diversity of Ashton's ballets are proof of his greatness and prove a challenge for even the best. Nobody can create a more touchingly tendered love duet than he, but there is also something Shakespearian in the way he can move within a single work from lyricism to comedy or wit. Ashton has created more than ballets. The dancers who grew up dancing his works, developed in the way he led them. What is sometimes called the "English style" in ballet; with its poise, musicality, quick footwork, purity and freshness, is really the "Ashton style".



Photo 27.

Ashton in the Creative Process (<https://alchetron.com/Frederick-Ashton#frederick-ashton-a4fa01f3-73a8-4994-be85-ef7f4666081-resize-750.jpeg>)

There are so many of Ashton's ballets which are masterpieces. *Les Patineurs*, *A Wedding Bouquet*, *Scènes de ballet*, *Cinderella*, *Daphnis and Chlôe*, *Sylvia*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *La Péri*, *Birthday Offering*, *Ondine*, *Marguerite and Armand*, *The Dream*, *Monotones I and II*, *Enigma Variation*, *Tales of Beatrix Potter*, *Five Brahms Waltzes in the manner of Isadora Duncan*, *Salut d'amour* and *Rhapsody* are examples of his fine heritage.

Frederick Ashton was acknowledged as a national treasure and named Commander in the Order of the British Empire (1950), received the Queen Elizabeth II Coronation Award from the Royal Academy of Dance (1959), knighted (1962), named as Companion of Honour (1970) and awarded the Order of Merit (1977). Yet, he was always humble and never lost his feeling of humility despite all his accomplishments. Ashton used to say that very little of his work would survive him, that it would be found dated and no longer "relevant" (Vaughan, 1994, p.13). It is sad that relatively few of his ballets are still in the repertoire of the Royal Ballet whereas his heritage should be preserved as the Mariinsky Ballet preserves Petipa's, New York City Ballet preserves Balanchine's and the Royal Danish Ballet preserves Bournonville's choreography authentically. Ashton left the rights to many of his ballets to friends and colleagues, including Margot Fonteyn, Antony Dowell, Michael Somes, Alexander Grant, Antony Dyson, Brian Shaw, Peter Schaufuss, and nephew, Anthony Russell-Roberts. Even now, Ashton's ballets aren't danced enough and sadly many are not in the repertoire of the Royal Ballet. The Frederick Ashton Foundation was set up in 2011 to preserve and enrich his legacy.

Acknowledgment

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Biodata of the Author



Assoc. Prof. Emine Zeynep Tuzcular Vural (Ph.D) was born in Istanbul, 1963. She started her early ballet education in London and graduated from the Istanbul Municipal Conservatory Ballet Department in 1983. She joined the Contemporary Ballet Company, Istanbul in 1979 and danced in ballets such as Equinoxe, Ferhat ile Şirin, Romeo and Juliette, Quest, Giselle, Paquita, Piaf Suite and King's Tomb. In 1991, she started her Ph.D. education at Istanbul University State Conservatory, Department of Performing Arts, Ballet and received her Proficiency in Art in 1995. She completed the Diploma in Ballet Teaching Studies Programme and gained her Professional Ballet Teacher Diploma from the Royal Academy of Dance (RAD) in 1997. Her choreographies have been presented in the Contemporary Turkish Choreographers Contemporary Dance and Ballet Performances, 20th International Istanbul Festival, 10th Youth Days (Istanbul City Theaters) and Contemporary Ballet Company. She continues to work as a classical ballet and anatomy teacher at the Istanbul University State Conservatory Ballet Department since 1986. **Affiliation:** Istanbul University State Conservatory, Performing Arts Department, Ballet, Istanbul, Turkey. **E-mail:** zeynepvural@my.net.tr **Orcid ID:** 0000-0001-6131-7085

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